

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for regasifying liquefied natural gas (LNG) aboard a LNG carrier vessel before the LNG is off-loaded as a gas, said method comprising:

flowing said LNG from storage tanks aboard said carrier vessel for storing LNG during transport through a vaporizer which is positioned aboard said vessel;

flowing seawater taken from the body of water surrounding said vessel through said vaporizer to heat said LNG within said vaporizer and to vaporize said LNG back into natural gas; and

transferring said natural gas from said vaporizer on said vessel to onshore facilities.

2. The method of claim 1 including:

boosting the pressure of said LNG while in its liquid phase before passing said LNG through said vaporizer.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said pressure of said LNG is boosted to a pressure in the range of 80-100 bars before the LNG is passed through said vaporizer.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said seawater is discharged from said vaporizer back into said body of water at a point which is at least 18 meters from where said seawater is taken from said body of water.

5. A system for regasifying liquefied natural gas (LNG) aboard a LNG carrier vessel before the LNG is off-loaded as a gas, said system comprising:

storage tanks aboard said carrier vessel for storing LNG during transport;

a vaporizer positioned aboard said vessel and adapted to receive LNG from said storage tanks;

means for flowing seawater through said vaporizer to heat said LNG within said vaporizer and to vaporize said LNG back into natural gas; and

a transfer line fluidly connected to said vaporizer to transport said natural gas from said vaporizer on said vessel to onshore facilities.

6. The onboard, regasification system of claim 5 including:

means for boosting the pressure of said LNG while in its liquid phase before passing said LNG through said vaporizer.

7. The onboard, regasification system of claim 6 wherein said vaporizer comprises:

a housing having an inlet and an outlet, said inlet adapted to receive seawater directly from the body of water surrounding said vessel and said outlet adapted to discharge the seawater after said seawater has passed through said vaporizer back into said body of water wherein the distance between said inlet and said outlet is at least 18 meters.

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